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Kissinger says Hersh charge is 'a slimy lie'

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New York (Reuter) — Henry A. Kissinger yesterday dismissed as "a slimy lie" accusations that in 1968, he gave Republican presidential candidate Richard M. Nixon secret details of the Johnson administration negotiations to end the Vietnam War, helping Mr. Nixon win the election.

In his book, "The Price of Power: Kissinger in the Nixon White House," journalist Seymour M. Hersh accuses Mr. Kissinger of playing both sides in the 1968 election campaign, giving Mr. Nixon important details of the negotiations and then offering campaign aides of Hubert H. Humphrey, the Democratic nominee, material to use against Mr. Nixon.

The 700-page book chronicles in unsparing and unflattering detail Mr. Kissinger's role in the Nixon administration.

Mr. Kissinger, who was close to the Johnson peace negotiators in Paris, steadfastly refused to comment on the book until early yesterday when he was questioned by Ted Koppel on the ABC television interview program, "Nightline."

He called the allegations about playing both sides in the 1968 campaign "a slimy lie" and said that from what he knew of the book, it was a disgrace.

Mr. Nixon, through a spokesman, declined comment, saying that he only comments on books he has written.

The Pulitzer Prize-winning Mr. Hersh, who spent four years interviewing 1,000 people for the book, maintains that by giving Mr. Nixon's staff information gleaned from friends on the U.S. negotiating side in Paris, Mr. Kissinger secured a place for himself in the Nixon administration.

Former Indian Prime Minister Morarji R. Desai yesterday denounced a section of the Hersh book that concerns him.

He called allegations that he once acted as CIA informant and as a special informant for Mr. Nixon and Mr. Kissinger in the 1971 Indo-Pakistani war a "mad thing."

Mr. Desai threatens to sue for libel if the book is published in India.

Mr. Kissinger said he was considering legal action, but admitted that under U.S. libel law, he may not have much of a case because he is a public figure.